

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on the Budget
Washington, DC 20515

September 30, 1999

New CBO Estimate Shows That Congress Is ALREADY Spending \$18 Billion of the Social Security Surplus

Dear Democratic Colleague:

Yesterday CBO Director Dan Crippen sent an update on the cost of this year's appropriation bills (see attached letter): based on those bills alone, Congress is already spending \$17.8 billion of the Social Security surplus. This is an increase from the \$16 billion CBO reported on August 26th.

Specifically, on July 1st, CBO reported that the fiscal year 2000 budget *excluding the Social Security trust funds* would be in surplus by \$14.3 billion. That surplus was based on the assumption that outlays for appropriated programs would remain at the FY 2000 outlay cap of \$579.8 billion, with no additions for emergencies or any other special items.¹ Now the House has acted on all 13 appropriations bills,² and CBO reports that total FY 2000 outlays for these 13 bills will be \$612.1 billion, or \$32.2 billion higher.

The conclusion is obvious. If Congress starts with an on-budget surplus of only \$14.4 billion and then spends an additional \$32.2 billion, it will end up with an on-budget deficit of at least \$17.8 billion.

Starting on-budget surplus, FY 2000 (CBO: July 1 st)	\$14.4 billion
Extra appropriation outlays, FY 2000 (CBO: Sept. 29 th)	<u>-\$32.2</u>
Resulting on-budget <i>deficit</i> , FY 2000	-\$17.8

¹Four items are allowed to be funded, in limited amounts, outside the caps: continuing disability reviews of SSI eligibility, adoption incentive payments, EITC compliance funding for the Treasury, and payments of US dues to international organizations to the extent we are in arrears.

²CBO's scoring reflects the twelve appropriations bills that have passed the House, using the conference version for the 5 conference agreements the House has approved. For the Labor-HHS subcommittee, CBO uses the bill as reported by subcommittee. As requested, CBO also added in the \$7.5 billion cost of the Senate-passed emergency farm aid.

This \$17.8 billion on-budget deficit means that some of the Social Security surplus will be used to cover other government spending, rather than used exclusively to pay down debt held by the public. The Republicans call this “spending the Social Security surplus,” and have vowed repeatedly and loudly not to let this happen.

But CBO’s estimates show that their own appropriations bills, which they have overwhelmingly supported, have **already** “spent the Social Security surplus.” It seems that they doth protest too much.

How can the Republicans make good on their promise? If you examine Table 1 of the attached letter from CBO, you will see that, at the direction of the Chairmen of the House and Senate Budget Committees, CBO has included “scorekeeping adjustments” in which CBO is directed to say that the bills will cost less than CBO actually thinks. CBO has separately identified these “scorekeeping adjustments,” and then backed them out — leaving CBO’s actual estimates — in the bottom line of the attached table. But this shows you how the Republican intend to close most of the gap: by assertion.

Finally, you should note that the on-budget deficit of \$17.8 billion *understates* the likely outcome. To begin with, it does not count the fact that \$32 billion in extra outlays will increase the debt and therefore generate increased interest payments. It also makes no allowance for other actions likely to occur this session: Medicare provider relief; tax extenders or tax breaks on the minimum wage bill; emergency funding for Hurricane Floyd, Kosovo, Wye River, and so on; or the costs of a patients’ bill of rights. Nor does it reflect the likelihood that appropriations bills will come back from conference at a higher level than when they passed the House.

I hope this information, stark as it is, will assist you in considering the many budgetary issues still facing Congress. If you have any questions, please call Tom Kahn of the Budget Committee staff at 226-7200.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John Spratt".

John M. Spratt, Jr.
Ranking Democratic Member



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
U.S. CONGRESS
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

Dan L. Crippen
Director

September 29, 1999

Honorable John M. Spratt, Jr.
Ranking Democratic Member
Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman:

I am pleased to respond to your letter of September 24, in which you requested information about the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (Labor/HHS) appropriation bill and the current status of appropriation action for fiscal year 2000.

Including funding designated as emergencies and scorekeeping adjustments specified by the House Budget Committee, CBO estimates that the Labor/HHS bill, as reported out of the subcommittee in the House, would provide budget authority of \$73.8 billion and result in outlays of \$84.4 billion in fiscal year 2000. Without the scorekeeping adjustment of \$929 million, estimated outlays would be \$85.3 billion in 2000. The 302(b) allocations specified in House Report 106-288 include \$73.0 billion in budget authority and \$75.1 billion in outlays for that bill. Table 1 summarizes CBO's scoring of all the appropriation bills, based on their current status in the House of Representatives.

You also asked about the impact of a number of advance appropriations for fiscal year 2001 that are included in the Labor/HHS bill. Table 2 shows CBO's estimates of outlays in 2000 and 2001 for the programs that would receive such funding, compared with the estimated outlays that would result if all the funds were made available in 2000. For the most part, CBO's outlay estimates are identical in both cases.

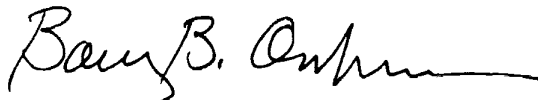
Your staff also inquired about the impact of the provision that would shift \$3 billion in funding for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families from 2000 to 2001. CBO estimates that this provision would reduce outlays in 2000 by \$25 million and increase outlays in 2001 by the same amount.

Honorable John M. Spratt, Jr.
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Finally, you asked us to compare CBO's July 1 baseline estimate of discretionary outlays with the outlays that would result from the current status of House appropriation action. In making this comparison, you asked that we (1) include the subcommittee version of the Labor/HHS bill, (2) add emergency agriculture spending provided by the Senate, (3) exclude scorekeeping adjustments, (4) include outlays for "cap adjustment items," and (5) include all emergencies. Adding \$7.5 billion in outlays for emergency farm aid to House action to date would produce total discretionary outlays of \$612.1 billion in 2000, \$32.3 billion more than CBO's baseline projection of \$579.8 billion. The details of this calculation are shown as an addendum to Table 1.

I hope this information is helpful to you. If you need additional information or have any questions, the CBO staff contact is Priscilla Aycock, who can be reached at 226-2850.

Sincerely,


for Dan L. Crippen
Director

Attachments

Honorable John R. Kasich
Chairman

Honorable C. W. Bill Young
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations

Honorable David R. Obey
Ranking Member

Honorable John Edward Porter
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education
Committee on Appropriations

Table 1: FY 2000 HOUSE CURRENT STATUS OF DISCRETIONARY APPROPRIATIONS

As of September 29, 1999

In millions of dollars

Subcommittees	302(b) Allocation a/		Current Status		Current Status Less Allocation	
	BA	Outlays	BA	Outlays	BA	Outlays
Agriculture						
Nonemergencies	13,839	14,120	13,839	14,282	0	162
Scoring adjustments	0	0	0	-162	0	-162
Emergencies	43	226	43	226	0	0
Total	13,882	14,346	13,882	14,346	0	0
Commerce, Justice, State, the Judiciary						
Nonemergencies	35,774	34,880	31,470	31,644	-4,304	-3,236
Arrearages	0	0	351	0	351	0
Scoring adjustments	0	0	-525	-864	-525	-864
Emergencies	0	27	4,476	4,145	4,476	4,118
Total	35,774	34,907	35,772	34,925	-2	18
Defense						
Nonemergencies	265,854	253,023	268,453	265,004	2,599	11,981
Scoring adjustments	0	0	-2,600	-13,073	-2,600	-13,073
Emergencies	1,838	6,107	1,838	6,107	0	0
Total	267,692	259,130	267,691	258,038	-1	-1,092
District of Columbia						
Nonemergencies	453	448	429	398	-24	-50
Scoring adjustments	0	0	0	-5	0	-5
Total	453	448	429	393	-24	-55
Energy and Water						
Nonemergencies	20,190	20,140	21,280	21,002	1,090	862
Scoring adjustments	0	0	0	-163	0	-163
Total	20,190	20,140	21,280	20,839	1,090	699
Foreign Operations						
Nonemergencies	12,625	12,620	12,616	12,728	-9	108
Arrearages	0	0	77	13	77	13
Scoring adjustments	0	0	0	-144	0	-144
Emergencies	0	548	0	548	0	0
Total	12,625	13,168	12,693	13,145	68	-23
Interior						
Nonemergencies	13,888	14,327	13,887	14,499	-1	172
Scoring adjustments	0	0	0	-172	0	-172
Emergencies	0	27	0	27	0	0
Total	13,888	14,354	13,887	14,354	-1	0
Labor, HHS, Education						
Nonemergencies	73,028	75,078	71,763	83,968	-1,265	8,890
Continuing disability reviews	0	0	200	174	200	174
Adoption assistance incentives			20	12	20	12
Scoring adjustments	0	0	0	-929	0	-929
Emergencies	0	30	1,792	1,137	1,792	1,107
Total	73,028	75,108	73,775	84,362	747	9,254
Legislative						
Nonemergencies	2,478	2,484	2,457	2,487	-21	3
Scoring adjustments	0	0	0	-28	0	-28
Total	2,478	2,484	2,457	2,459	-21	-25

Table 1: FY 2000 HOUSE CURRENT STATUS OF DISCRETIONARY APPROPRIATIONS
As of September 29, 1999
In millions of dollars

Subcommittees	302(b) Allocation a/		Current Status		Current Status Less Allocation	
	BA	Outlays	BA	Outlays	BA	Outlays
Military Construction						
Nonemergencies	8,374	8,714	8,374	8,714	0	0
Emergencies	0	61	0	61	0	0
Total	8,374	8,775	8,374	8,775	0	0
Transportation						
Nonemergencies	12,400	43,285	6,474	39,448	-5,926	-3,837
Scoring adjustments	0	0	0	-1,438	0	-1,438
Emergencies	0	160	0	160	0	0
Total	12,400	43,445	6,474	38,170	-5,926	-5,275
Treasury and General Government						
Nonemergencies	13,706	14,115	13,591	14,571	-115	456
Earned income tax credit	0	0	144	146	144	146
Scoring adjustments	0	0	0	-598	0	-598
Total	13,706	14,115	13,735	14,119	29	4
Veterans, HUD, Independent Agencies						
Nonemergencies	68,633	81,973	71,632	83,007	2,999	1,034
Scoring adjustments	0	0	0	-1,048	0	-1,048
Emergencies	0	72	0	72	0	0
Total	68,633	82,045	71,632	82,031	2,999	-14
Total discretionary appropriations:						
Nonemergencies	541,242	575,207	536,265	591,752	-4,977	16,545
Cap adjustment items (CDR's, arrearages, EITC, adoption assistance)	0	0	792	345	792	345
Scoring adjustments	0	0	-3,125	-18,624	-3,125	-18,624
Emergencies - Previously Enacted	1,881	7,258	1,881	7,258	0	0
Emergencies - New	0	0	6,268	5,225	6,268	5,225
Total current status	543,123	582,465	542,081	585,956	-1,042	3,491
Addendum:						
Adjustments to House Current Status:						
Include emergency farm aid			7,692	7,518		
Exclude scoring adjustments			3,125	18,624		
Total House Current Status, Adjusted			552,898	612,098		
CBO July, 1999 Baseline (excluding pending emergencies)			539,285	579,826		
Current Status Less Baseline			13,613	32,272		

a/ Source: Report on the Revised Suballocation of Budget Allocations for Fiscal Year 2000 (H. Report 106-288), dated August 4, 1999.

NOTE:

Summary of budget committee scoring adjustments:	BA	OL
Defense	0	-9,700
Highways & mass transit	0	-1,339
Outlay reduction equal to 1.14% of new BA	0	-2,837
Spectrum auction sales	-2,600	-2,600
Crime victims trust fund (fines)	-525	-525
Remove estimate of contingent emergencies	0	-1,623
Total	-3,125	-18,624



Table 2: ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS FOR FY 2001 IN THE LABOR, HHS, EDUCATION BILL, AS REPORTED BY THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON SEPTEMBER 23, 1999, SHOWING THE EFFECT OF PROVIDING THESE APPROPRIATIONS IN FY 2001 RATHER THAN FY 2000 (in millions of dollars)

	Scoring if Part of Funding is Advanced in FY 2001 (House Subcommittee Bill)				Scoring if Total Funding is Appropriated in FY 2000			Effect of Providing Advances in FY 2001			
	BA		Outlays		BA		Outlays	BA		Outlays	
	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2000		2001	2000	2001	2000
Adult Training	216	644	17	791	860	17	791	-644	644	0	0
Dislocated Workers	315	945	63	819	1,260	63	819	-945	945	0	0
Job Corps	341	1,018	147	1,066	1,359	147	1,066	-1,018	1,018	0	0
Head Start	3,360	1,400	1,236	2,350	4,760	1,751	2,599	-1,400	1,400	-515	-249
Innovative Education Block Grant-Title VI	97	288	19	250	385	19	250	-288	288	0	0
Teacher Empowerment Act	450	1,350	90	1,170	1,800	90	1,170	-1,350	1,350	0	0
Special Education State Grants	2,225	3,608	292	3,791	5,833	292	3,791	-3,608	3,608	0	0
Vocational and Adult Education	487	1,045	77	996	1,532	77	996	-1,045	1,045	0	0
Pell Grants	5,334	2,286	1,594	6,217	7,620	1,594	6,217	-2,286	2,286	0	0
Total	12,825	12,584	3,535	17,450	25,409	4,050	17,699	-12,584	12,584	-515	-249